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A DRAMATISM OF COMEDY: THE VOICE OF EUDORA WELTY

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State
University, San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
English Composition


By
Dianne Briley
August 1984

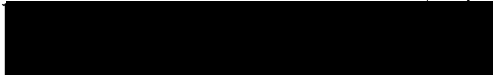

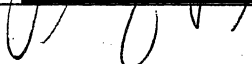
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Approved by:


Chair




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ABSTRACT

Kenneth Burke maintains that every human situation is necessarily rhetorical. The necessity lies in the hierarchical order of people's lives that they constantly strive to establish and maintain. Rhetoric is instrumental to the natural order of things because our very existence relies on our advanced form of communication, language. Our language is filled with rhetorical symbols. For example, house may be a symbol that could mean security, privacy, or kingdom as it transcends into ideas, attitudes and feelings. Rhetoric is a natural part of personal relations where we hold inner debate, as both speaker and hearer, to establish an emotional balance within our world. It is also a natural part of in-group relationships where we strive for accepted order through politeness, diplomacy, entreaty, etc.

Burke's dramatistic strategy of analysis follows this natural order to chart the human drama in art. It progresses, hierarchically, to uncover human motivation through language patterns. Broad enough to cover almost everything, it permits repeated deviations away from and back to a fixed analytic goal. Thus, it is an excellent and individual heuristic for structuring a rhetorical analysis of any artistic medium.

Eudora Welty's comic short fiction provides many instances to demonstrate the applicability of dramatism. In turn, dramatism engages Welty's deceptively simple prose style in a dialectical study to uncover the complex, rhetorical patterns that disclose its stylistic mysteries and hidden potentials.

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CHAPTER I

DRAMATISM

Before a dramatistic analysis of Welty's prose style can begin, the method's foundations need to be established.

What is dramatism? As one might suppose, it derives its name from the drama; and as in a play, the Act is the central focus so far as it reveals human motivation. To be understood, dramatism must be viewed in terms of the Aristotelian Quis? Quid? Quibus? Auxilus? Ubi? Quomodo? (Who? What? By what assistance? Where? Why? How? When?).¹ Burke pentadically narrows these questions to What, Who, How, Where and Why, to render them pertinent to any language situation, and it is this language focus that separates dramatism from the drama. Herein also lies dramatism's heuristic powers. Always questioning, never evaluating, an analysis not burdened with memorization, it can engage in a perpetual searching process to uncover understanding through human motivation.² Consequently, the "human drama" becomes a flexible term that can be applied to any artistic medium.

The pentad of questions comparatively relate to a pentad of terms: Act (What?), Agent (Who?), Agency

(How?), Scene (Where?), and Purpose (Why?). "Ratio" describes their interrelationships;³ and while it must be remembered that no term can be self-evident, still all five can exist only as a result of their ancestral "Act," ancestral because it suggests the "point of departure," the god term"⁴ from which the other four terms that make up Burke's analytic universe, evolve. As Burke informs us, each term travels back to "the ground" or "substance,"⁵ (he uses the terms interchangeably) of its existence, or its "causal ancestor."⁶ Dramatism then conducts its search to discover the ancestral "Act," during the course of analysis, by means of a ratio in order to proportion one term to another, while still taking into account the other three terms, always present in the human drama. This may be as fundamental as the Scene-Act ratio of a physical backdrop to an actor's spoken lines, or it can become more intricate.

As illustration, a Scene-Act ratio may find that Eudora Welty's original writing "Act" uncovers the "Scene" of Welty's own cultural experiences she reenacts through her characters. We as readers may then become "Agents" in search of her "Act." Using language as an "Agency," we conduct our search, that appears within the Southern traditional "Scene," whose "Purpose" is to discover authorial intent. This, in turn, will lead back to Welty's original writing "Act," but with newly gained knowledge.

Further, the pentad of terms are generative because they are flexible. In a search for the Act of audience appreciation, for instance, the reader as "Agent" might view Welty as the "Agent" of her Act, and on and on; the effect is like a prism bending light in different directions. A panorama of 25 ratios is possible, and each ratio provides a different point of view.

As individual ratios provide different points of view, the circumference, formed as a result, provides a vast range of interest⁷ by continually broadening and narrowing to become what Burke defines as the "Container," the narrow scope or boundary, needed to unleash a broader scope, the "thing contained,"⁸ which is the ever-evolving dramatistic analysis. Let's take an example from Welty's "Why I Live at the P.O." to demonstrate the flexibility of an Act-Agent ratio whose circumference both broadens and narrows during analysis. When Stella-Rhondo utters the words, "Sister wants to know why you don't shave off your beard"⁹ to a father as old as the hills, whose beard may outlive him, the verbal "Act" presents merely a situation involving two sisters and their father. As the circumference enlarges, however, the speaker's "Act" becomes negative feedback, promoted by the "Agent" (the speaker), who wishes to anger her sister, despite the father's reaction. Alter the scope a bit more, and it becomes a matter of sibling rivalry. From here, the

circumference might again enlarge to study the comedy behind the "Act," then narrow into a study of Southern myth through the characters' original verbal "Acts."

This is the basic framework of dramatism and how it functions in analysis as outlined in Burke's A Grammar of Motives. Students can use ratios alone as tools for a Burkeian "teasing out" of those values and ideas that might be missed without the process of quizzation and debate this method affords. It must be added, however, that Burke does not abandon us here. Dramatism extends to incorporate Burke's 15 books, and his variety of articles, analyses and interpretations too numerous to mention. All either anticipate, describe or demonstrate dramatism's unique approach to analysis. Naturally, this brief study can touch upon only limited aspects of the dramatic process, although I will try to outline and demonstrate those theories that are most essential to the methodology as a whole. However, even though Burke's theories fill volumes, his critical strategy remains constant. It moves by debate through the human drama to deliberate what man is to make of man.

Burke was able to derive his methodology by borrowing from ancient Rhetoricians and Philosophic Schools, then individualizing his interpretations into a modern, flexible craft. For instance, dramatism derives from an anthropological reasoning, close to the fundamentals

Charles Darwin outlines in The Origin of Species. As

Burke defines:

Man is
the symbol-using (symbol-making, symbol misus-
ing animal)
inventor of the negative (or moralized by the
negative)
separated from his natural condition by instru-
ments of his own making
goaded by the spirit¹⁰ of hierarchy (or moved by
the sense of order)

It is Burke's use of "symbols," the "negative," and "hier-
archy," that decidedly supports, yet transcends, the
Darwinian theory of human behavior.

Burke, like Darwin, points out that without symbols,
the use of language, man would be forced to remain in his
natural condition. Solely through language is man distin-
guished from other life forms. Burke extends this basic
theory into a dialectic search for human motivation.¹¹

An illustration would be searching for the moral role
Welty's prose exposes through a Scene-Act analysis of
"Shower of Gold." The phrase, "What makes me say a thing
like that? I wouldn't say it to my husband, you mind you
forget it,"¹² involves an immediate and symbolic "Act"
that can discover a gossipy, clan-like Southern "Scene"
where intimacies are shared more readily with an outsider
than with immediate friends. This can create a dichotomy
that may unearth the how and why of the rigid character in
small-town life, and the psychology involved, that pre-
vails in most of Welty's stories. Thus, Burke's essential

connection between human motivation and language epistemologically unfolds.

Such social patterns help to reveal the Burkeian "negative" that functions through contradiction. Outlined explicitly in Burke's A Rhetoric of Religion, it points the way to search for what he describes as "the logical language sequence of debate." Argumentatively, the negative shares its position with the positive. The comic notion it often achieves comes from the ambivalence of its testiness. For instance, what Burke describes as the great thousand thou-shalt-nots, takes into account that love thy neighbor really means respect your neighbor's no-trespassing sign.¹³ By viewing a work through this perspective of incongruity,¹⁴ one moves beyond mere analysis into the deeper level of reasoning needed to characterize the always changing, always developing human condition.

A similar negative frame exists in Attitudes Toward History where Burke recounts the hierarchy of literary to actual history that has built personalities through social idioms. In this book, he starts with Bergsonian flat contradictions, then transcends them to shift, from the symbols created by individuals, to the individual's representation of the societal world in which he lives.¹⁵ This leads to surrealism by way of the physical to the mental to the ideal, etc. Thus, he is interested in

history only as a rhetorical process, an extension of man's rhetorical genius, that has consistently developed language hierarchically.

Similar hierarchies that "goad" man's existence, extend to Burke's critical program as well. In Permanence and Change, he advocates a methodological approach that relates its ordered structure to the natural order of man's life. In this way, analysis reflects, as it charts, human motivation.

Burke breaks dramatism down into three major categories: Identification, Clusters and Form. These categories establish a hierarchy of analysis. First, the artist's use of symbols are "identified" by the audience. Next, the artist's key symbols must be "clustered" as they grow into "radiations" of other symbols to uncover deeper meaning. With the artist's structure of symbols critically established, then and only then, can we consider his individual "form" of emotional appeal.

"Identification" has its roots in ancient rhetorical theory. Indeed, almost half of Burke's A Rhetoric of Motives is devoted to what he entitles "traditional principles of rhetoric." "Identification" can be compared with Aristotle's scientific studies of art as an "imitation of life." It also compares to the ancient view of art as "pure" persuasion, whereby the artist's only concern is to use rhetoric so persuasive as to direct an

audience's views to the speaker's way of thinking.¹⁶ However, Burke extends these ancient theories into what he terms "new" rhetoric.¹⁷ From the biologically, psychological approach of science, he develops his own sociopsychological approach that is instrumental in studying the human drama through an identification of life-to-art symbols. Pure persuasion, in Burkeian analysis, may be redefined as something closer to persuasive discourse. The best example lies in what Burke terms "patterns of experience" in prose:

A particular environmental condition may be: a cruel father, an indulgent mother, a long stretch of poverty, the death of a favorite aunt, rough treatment at the hands of other boys, gentle years in a garden, what you will. Any such specific environmental condition calls forth and stresses certain of the universal experiences as being more relevant to it, with a slighting of those less relevant. Such selections are patterns of experience. They distinguish us as characters.¹⁸

In the simplest terms, "Identification" is a verbal joining of interests through the symbols the artist creates.¹⁹ In dramatic analysis, it functions as a structure in which the process of rhetorical argumentation can be organized in the work as a whole.

This dialectical search for symbols helps to redefine what Aristotle would term "universal experience" in Burkeian terms. For example, Burke notes that we have all felt despair. However, portraying it through art does not render it an actual universal experience. Despair in the

abstract is not an experience at all, since each of us experiences emotion in our own way. There are no universal feelings to a dramatistic way of thinking; common experiences can arise only through common judgments.

After artistic symbols have been identified, Burke suggests going a step further by "Clustering," or lining up "grammatical" relations inherent in the author's key terms.²⁰ "Equations Illustrated in Golden Boy"²¹ exemplifies Clusters though opposition of the two symbols "violin" and "prizefighter:"

The total dramatic agon is broken down, by analytic dissociation, into "violin" as the symbol of the protagonist and "prizefight" as the symbol of the antagonist, with the two symbols competing in an over-all cooperative act, as teams competitively work together to make a game. Here the equations are especially easy to observe, as you find, by statistically charting the course of the plot, that prizefight equals competition, cult of money, leaving home, getting the girl, while violin equals cooperative social unity, disdain of money, staying home, not needing the girl. Obviously, "prizefight" and "violin" don't mean that for all of us. But that is the way the clusters line up, within the conditions of the drama.²²

Other examples of this statistical method of analysis can be found throughout Burke's Philosophy of Literary Form. His approach to "Clusters" typifies the long established "semantic school." It is conceived from three sources: Marxist, Nietzschean, and Freudian psychology.²³ With a psychological perspective added, words require deeper thought; because they are undermined, they never actually

mean what they pretend to mean. They become tools either "in the service of class interest (Marx), or of a cunning disguised will to power (Nietzsche), or an all-powerful subconscious drive (Freud)." ²⁴

The critic's job then is to unmask the "symbol's" verbal camouflage, by a "what goes with what" ²⁵ process, until the important features in the work reveal themselves. It must be noted, however, that Burke is neither a Marxist, Nietzschean nor Freudian critic. He merely borrows from their established theories, based on social, emotional, and psychological sciences, then transcends them into analytical human dramas to focus on individual judgment as a way of obtaining the truth. The truth, to Burke, is the author's conscious selection of symbols.

The artist, Burke states, "although he be perfectly conscious of selecting a certain kind of imagery to reinforce a certain kind of mood, cannot possibly be conscious of the interrelationships among all these equations." ²⁶ The relationships of all the parts must be charted in the finished product so that human motivation, structure, and form (appeal) can be realized for their material and transcendental insights. Everything works progressively to reveal the Purpose behind the Acts that appear on the surface.

This brings us to the link of formal or ceremonial art. "Form," Burke advocates, is the essence of art. It

is the communicative rapport between artist and audience that fulfills appetites. He insists that the artist is a deliberate evoker of the emotions of a previsionsed audience. Since the artist is emphatically, even aggressively, conscious of arousing a certain type of appeal, Burke maintains that analysis depends, not upon acceptance or non-acceptance of the work, but on the artist's personal sympathy with the emotion-provoking symbol used, and an admiration of the way in which the artist constructs his symbols to that end. This redefines the "correctness" of a work, from its common definition of right or wrong, to Burkeian terms, as the emotion the artist creates to fulfill the appetites of his audience. A search for the spirit of the work moves by way of a quizzical sequence of debate.

A dialectic analysis, used when judging any art form, Burke equates to poetry. He terms this the "Poetic."²⁷ This term separates "Form" from the scientific Aristotelian "imitation and rhythm"²⁸ theory on which it is based. Speaking synonymously of art and poetry, Aristotle plays up the commonplace in art as "imitating" or recording natural objects as fictional. He also remarks that man has a natural inclination toward repetitive "rhythm," and that these natural patterns are our way of learning by emotional response. Burke acknowledges these natural inclinations, but notes that art radically is not science. His dialectic

searchings then become "Poetic," a combination of the Aristotelian science of poetry and man, and the Burkeian dialectic, that stresses motivation and judgment.²⁹ This term can easily focus on a "Formal" study of human motivation by a mind-flexing jugglery of the artist and his symbols that are symptomatic of himself, and of the emotion he creates to gain a certain emotional response from his audience.

The most basic explications of Form can be found in Burke's Counter-Statement. His only book to anticipate dramatism, it recognizes the principles that are the essence of the artist's motivation, and that stimulates a mass, yet individual response. As Burke explains:

On a mountain top, at sea, among a primitive tribe, in a salon -- the modes of experience so differing in each instance that people in two different schemes of living can derive very different universal experiences from an identical event. The hypochondriac facing a soiled glove may experience a deep fear of death to which the trained soldier facing a cannon is insensitive.³⁰

Each analysis made of a single work will be individual because experiences are individual. However, Burke also notes that human nature is never so self-evident as to vary so radically from individual to individual. A "rest stop" in the work is made at positions where there are limited numbers of allowable interpretations which the artist creates, through recognizable symbols such as trees and gardens; and each member of the audience will, at some point,

identify with them. This allows us to make our individual analyses, yet, at the same time, we are swayed by the symbols the artist creates.

To chart the artist's conceivable system of emotion-provoking symbols, Burke suggests a variety of Formal patterns to follow, progressively, as they appear throughout the work. Of these, three are most essential:

1) Qualitative progression. It charts the emotional quality of a work. Welty's voice of comic relief, that provides a moment of thought following her more tensely portrayed grotesqueries, is one example.

2) Repetitive form. This is the "consistent maintaining of a principle under new guises."³¹ It focuses on details that reinforce the main theme. Using Welty's "The Wide Net" as example, Doc's constant repetition of "Stay with 'em boys," comically represents a group effort to drag Pearl River for Hazel's body even though Doc knows she hasn't drowned. This, in turn, reinforces the protagonist's patience and diligence he must learn in order to mature.

3) Syllogistic progression. Burke explains this as "the form of a perfectly conducted argument, advancing step-by-step."³² Perhaps the best example lies in a murder mystery whose plot develops by transmitting the clues that build consecutively.

These patterns can support one another to realize the

full range of an artist's craft. For example, the Qualitative Form of comic relief may transcend Repetitive Form because it assumes "new guises" as artistic events change. As these new guises qualitatively progress, they, in turn, form a "step-by-step" Syllogistic advancement.

These patterns serve to individualize a work by examining the motivation of the author. What moves the author, and how his arrangement dialectically forms a balance between himself and the type of emotion he purposely generates through his artistic medium, again, demonstrates dramatism's connection between language and motivation.

Dramatism then builds an analysis based on personalities, the human drama. Its application to Eudora Welty's comic short fiction is especially helpful, due to the correlations that exist. Like dramatism, Welty's conversational style of writing focuses on personalities. She presents mainly abstract ideas that lend themselves well to a Burkeian debate. Also, the serious quality of her comedy that functions to imitate, yet to improve on the real, follows the Burkeian theory that comic humanism is "negatively" a kind of morose irony. Burke explains that if a hero lacks humor, "he does not lack grotesqueness -- and the grotesque is but the humorous without its proper adjunct of laughter."³³ This certainly describes Welty's use of comedy.

A dramatistic analysis then can prominently recognize

the rhetorical devices Welty's work assumes to discover her individualities of style. Also, by matching the method to the medium so intently, the heuristics of dramatism are more consciously realized.

Consequently, I have chosen, from Welty's vast collection of thirty-nine stories, six of her best tales to represent her prose style, and, in turn, to demonstrate Kenneth Burke's dramatism. The framework for analysis will equate Welty's writing "Act" to the motivational "Scene" of her prose.

"Identifying" the rhetoric that structures Welty's prose begins the "hierarchy" of this dialectic analysis.

CHAPTER II

IDENTIFICATION

Welty's short stories are instances of persuasive discourse -- not as the "pure" art of persuasion only -- but as they lean towards the dramatistic symbolic action.

In examining the interrelationships of author, text, and reader, this study remains primarily inside the stories, concerned not with Welty herself, but with her persona as storyteller, and with her characters who represent the Southern "common folk." The role of the reader then becomes one of audience participation in what John Stuart Mill describes as "rhetoric overheard."³⁴ In this way, the stories can be shown as sharply dramatic and vitally rhetorical. To analyze their comic style and structure then, is, in effect, to analyze a persuasive appeal.

Several aspects of rhetoric structures the comedy: grammar (the mood and tense of verbs, sentence structure, etc.); diction (both for its denotations and connotations); subtle shifts of cadence; imagery, symbols and figures of speech.

Obedient to the School of American humor, which projects local color elements through puns, ironic inversions and the burlesque,³⁵ Welty strives for excellence

within this established form. Like Twain and Faulkner, she is derivative, yet her imagination holds no vice. It flourishes, producing excellent and enduring examples of eccentric characters in "Why I Live at the P.O." and "Old Mr. Marblehall;" portrayal of historical figures in "Powerhouse" and "A Still Moment;" and of ancient ritualistic myth in "The Wide Net" and "Shower of Gold." Like other American Humorists, these by Welty are conspicuous for their precision of language and their sure command of verbal humor.

Welty's lyrical cadence of speech that works within a stylized form, drawn by symbolic intricacy, relies on an abundance of verbs that create the South's soft rhythmic speech as opposed to our harsh Northern staccato.

Her storyteller's active characterization in each tale follows a repetitive pattern. Her urbanity is at once apparent; she tells of everyday people, in their everyday settings, often by using colloquial expressions. No newcomer to life, she exhibits a sophisticated knowledge, born of long experience. She must, therefore, be envisioned, I think, as a woman of mature years -- neither youthfully sentimental or self-indulgent with her words, nor so exhausted by age that she can summon no energy for each of her fictional endeavors. Her wit and the logic of her conscious commentary places her among the educated, while a rigidity of rhetorical patterns often involves her in the

region. When she either quotes or assumes the role of one of her characters, her diction becomes rigidly rhetorical. It is clear her characters have no love for originality, either in ideas or words. Their speech is uttered not only to communicate, but also for the taste of words. Their common diction includes an omission of auxiliaries such as "that there dog sitting on its fine tail,"³⁶ the Southern drawl, "she's settin' a waitin in the road,"³⁷ and a variety of local idioms.

This form of comedy lends itself to the burlesque as the characters' verbal actions ironically transform them into caricatures of individuals within their culture. Its comic influence is explained in Henry Bergson's famous essay, "Laughter." According to Bergson:

The attitudes, gestures and movements of the human body are laughable in exact proportion as the body reminds us of a mere machine.³⁸

The rigidity of Welty's assumed role as the eccentric post-mistress of China Grove in "Why I Live at the P.O." reflects this fixed form. She follows a single pattern throughout -- that of a rebellious rivalry toward her younger and favored sister. The reason for her obsession is clear. Stella-Rhondo has run off with Sister's old boyfriend, Mr. Whitacker, and has now returned. Sister's monologue is comic, not because of the coy attitude she maintains, but because of her manner of speaking. Common idioms such as "kiss my foot" and "she has no more manners

than the man in the moon"³⁹ flow from her mouth with such stylized, painless triumph that one can see the fiercely indignant gleam in her eye. The structure of these statements emphasizes stress patterns that would turn the story into a series of high pitched spondees within its predominantly trochaic meter if not for Sister's logical function to her argument. This takes the form of irony. Although never subtle, allusions to the flesh-colored kimono "all cut on the bias"⁴⁰ which was part of Stella Rhondo's trousseau, is but one example of Sister's ironic mask.

If, in most of the tale, Sister's voice is openly jocular and teasingly ironic, with an undertone of pessimism, one notices the end is essentially somber, though tempted with macabre humor. The transitional "But" that begins the second to last paragraph signals a shift in logic and rhetoric:

But here I am (at the P.O.) and here I'll stay.
I want the world to know I'm happy.⁴¹

Through her revenge, Sister has shut herself off from the rest of the family which makes up her little world. She, in turn, moves out to take up residence at her vasion, the P.O. Her argument throughout would, at this point, turn hypothetical situations into fact, structuring the story to end with a lonely theme and serious tone, if it were not for the mechanism of Sister's actions. They demonstrate to the audience that she is only following a hollow

routine. She will, no doubt, for she is counting the days since her departure, make up with her family; only to repeat a similar scene at a later date.

Like "Why I live at the P.O.," "Old Mr. Marblehall" presents burlesque and ironic comedy, yet its cadence is slow and regular: its sentences lethargic and static. The beginning sentence contains its own refutation as Mr. Marblehall makes the subjunctive mood his grammatical instrument of irony. The development of the story can be described as a progressive joke. Each of the situations he envisions is more unlikely than its predecessor.

Mr. Marblehall "is leading a double life."⁴² In this tale, the line between fact and fantasy soon begins to blur. Welty, as storyteller, informs her audience, at once, that "Old Mr. Marblehall never did anything, never got married until he was sixty."⁴³ He is a little old man, living in an "ancestral home,"⁴⁴ who goes out walking or is driven in his carriage, who is supposed to travel for his health, and who remains insultingly alive, even though he might as well be dead. Mr. Marblehall, however, is determined to be noticed. From this point on, the ludicrous dominates as Mr. Marblehall reveals his rebellious reaction to the public attitude of Natchez, the "little party-giving town,"⁴⁵ in which he lives.

The people would be shocked if they knew of his double life; for down in a poorer section of town, Mr. Marblehall

has another home, another wife, another son. Each contrasts with the first through appearance and disposition. Where his first wife is tall, nervous and quiet, his second is plump and "combustible,"⁴⁶ always complaining. In his second life, Mr. Marblehall becomes Mr. Bird.

The timelessness of Mr. Marblehall's world is prevalent. He imagines someone will find him out, but it is only imagination that spurs him on. In the following episode, Marblehall imagines it to be one of his sons that discovers his secret:

You see one night he is going to follow Mr. Marblehall (or Mr. Bird) out of his house. Mr. Marblehall has said...he is leaving for one of his health trips...But why is he leaving on foot? This will occur to the little boy...So he will follow his father...The little boy will see him -- or not see him. That would be an interesting thing, a moment of telepathies. (Mr. Marblehall can imagine it.).⁴⁷

Everything in these lines seems remote, dreamlike, somehow drugged. The pun on "telepathies" suggests subtle semantic links between its synonyms "communication" and "unexplainable." This argument, between his worlds, is Mr. Marblehall's sole form of communication, and can only be explained as an obscene parody of death, and of the fulfillment which life presently denies him. The subtle shift of verb tenses from the sentence beginning the tale, "Mr. Marblehall never did anything," to the present tense in this passage, affords a release from the first sentence. In order to be noticed, someone must find Mr. Marblehall out.

These present verbs depict Marblehall as an Agent in the realm of this possibility. This possibility is the "comic correctness" of the tale that Burke would contend affords permission of Marblehall's second life as well as for the terrifying future of the first.

Then as the tale comes to a close, the rate of progression between his worlds slows even more to less than a snails pace. Thus, the main rhetorical function of the first sentence is to refute its own vision, to show that no one, not even Mr. Marblehall, who conspires relentlessly, can be free from time. The punchline is ironically directed at himself.

Old Mr. Marblehall! He may have years ahead yet to wake up bolt upright in the bed under the naked bulb, his heart thumping, his old eyes watering and wild, imagining that ^{if}₄₈ people knew about his double life, they'd die.

The storyteller also reveals that even in imagination, immunity from moral public attitude would be intolerable.

The vitality and individuality of style in "Old Mr. Marblehall," as in all others of Welty's tales, arises from formal and underlying conventionality of Southern moral values. For all their seriousness, the tales are comic; while for all their levity, they are deeply serious.

In "Powerhouse" as well, the two worlds of dream and actuality combine. Powerhouse, however, has his fantasy world, yet wields it masterfully, prodding it, shaping it into music.

Reminiscent of Fats Waller, whose vivid impression prompted the character, the storyteller manages to convey the Negro jazz musician as a person with a wide range of knowledge, experience and energy. Her tale is devoted to a hyperbolic progression of symbol and image. Its grammar is active and urgent. The impressive movement of the tale may be said to duplicate the rhythm of jazz music.

Imagery describing Powerhouse -- "his big, glowing eyes," "his great fat stomach with piston legs," his sound, "He's going all the time,"⁴⁹ -- proposes an improbability extending beyond the realm of fact. Such imagery may remind us once again of Bergson's definition of the comic predicament, "something mechanical encrusted on the living."⁵⁰

Powerhouse is bigger than life. All history of jazz music becomes his own. The grandeur and power of his resounding effectiveness "in the world" dominates through dynamic images of the vigorous, kinetic verbs used to describe his nature -- "magnified," "glares," "lifts," "shouts," "glitters." He perpetuates a mystery on the crowd. But the illusion is at all times undercut by reminders of its reality. The piece he plays is "Pagan Love Song;" the theme is "My Wife is Dead."⁵¹ The images representing a gamesome pleasure of verbal display are combined with the pain of sinister meaning that arguably leads to the climax at the end where emotion and experience

-- both savage and painful, yet tender -- are conveyed through Powerhouse's music. At this point, midway through the tale, Powerhouse roars:

Come on. He is already at the back door...His face is smelling the terrible rain... Well, they emptying buckets, says Powerhouse in a mollified voice. On the streets he holds his hands out and turns up the blanched palms like sieves... Watch out little brother don't shrink.⁵²

Lyrical trochees abound in this phrase. However, it is most important to note that the rain, depicted here, is the basic metaphor for the blues, that often accompanies, and is incorporated into jazz. Here it forms a paradox of jest to reality. It suggests the dynamic imagery, which earlier associated the jazzman with himself, is now attached to time. Powerhouse, by contrast, becomes a helpless and even hunted wretch. Time, in this metaphysical symbol, looms as a pursuer so terrible and merciless that his victim dares not face him. Yet, with slavery times behind him, and personal torments ahead, he can flee in no direction. So he accepts and wittingly jokes as, about to play "Pagan Love Song," he puts his hand teasingly into his pocket. He does this as if to pull out the fatal telegram he has luridly described as bearing evidence of his own wife's dramatic leap from a window in her nightgown. "Burst her brains all over the world," he exclaims. But he never produces it. "No babe, it ain't the truth,"⁵³ he says.

Powerhouse feels his music; the music blurs emotion and reality. There will be endless space and time in the lyrics of jazz and blues, the storyteller suggests, to be played, remembered, enjoyed, and even understood.

The vigorous verbs, the active spondees and trochaic cadence, that dominates throughout, is then given special rhetorical force at the end, as any line that before could underscore the paradox, fades in Powerhouse's last refrain.

Somebody loves me.

Maybe...He uses all his right hand on a trill

Maybe...A vast, impersonal and yet furious
grimace transfigures his wet face...

Maybe it's you.⁵⁴

The voice is active; its sharp lyrical quality must be inescapably felt and heard.

"A Still Moment" as well, uses legendary characters, who provide the setting for intensely private searchings. Lorenzo Dow, the riding preacher; James Murrell, the outlaw; and John James Audubon, the naturalist painter, all wrestle with their temporary triumphs that have made them famous. Each is essentially frustrated with his mission. Dow has the passion to save souls, but receives only a lack of response. Murrell, believing he is possessed by the devil, is intent on destroying the present. He falls in beside Dow, visualizing him as his next victim. Audubon, by contrast, is normally serene and reserved. But Audubon is presently seen to have his own sense of urgency. Each

man questions the final meaning of life from a different point of view.

In the opening segment, the storyteller introduces Dow as a stereotype of his colorful, historical proponent:

I must have souls! rang in his windy ears. He rode as if never to stop, toward his night's appointment.⁵⁵

Similarly, legendary accounts of Dow's own 1800's journey to Natchez maintains that it was undertaken with determination and a swift, Spanish race horse. Always, he went about his mission to save sinners in that dangerous wilderness, amid thieves and beasts, "with a speed deserving respect even of post riders."⁵⁶ He attracted constant attention as he rode, inadvertently yelling such one-liners as "sinners, you are making a beeline from time to eternity."⁵⁷ By relying on a machine-like predecessor of the real, the storyteller can gain control over the comedy to reveal its serious assumptions:

The poor souls that were not saved were darker and more pitiful than those that were...Light up in God's name! He (Dow) called, in pain of his disappointment.⁵⁸

This quote contains its own antithesis because, as Dow stops to consider his human fallibilities, the irony resides in his affirmation, through metaphor, of his morbid species of love. His passion is to save all sinners. However, at the same time, he declares this love impossible in the future. All souls cannot be saved. Even as he asserts

that he has saved many, he creates the very image he excludes.

Then as he is joined by the other two men, we hear a similar futile tone resounding from each of their separate worlds:

Here gathered in the wilderness, then, are three fiery souls, each absolute in its consuming desire, for 'what each of them wanted was simply all.' To save all souls, to destroy all men, to see and to record all⁵⁹ life that filled this world -- all, all...

This major irony is supported by the predominance of the first person, singular pronouns, "his," "he," "I." Even though the men are together as a group, each of their verbal actions, each of their gestures, is performed by or upon them singly. The unilateral character of those acts reinforces the impression that the storyteller is asking metaphysical questions, but attempts no answers. The only solution to a mystery is yet another mystery. The reality of the tale becomes a Pandora's box.

While the cadence of "A Still Moment" may be said to be actively passive, relying, for the most part, on the steady, regular rhythm of the storytellers ponderous development of theme, "The Wide Net" explores life through mythical time to possess its own distinctive cadence, supported by its grammar and imagery. This comedy evokes the mood and spirit of the most ancient rites of comedy: Dionysian feasts, fertility rites of primitive cultures,

and folk ceremonies that celebrate changing seasons, marriage and birth.

A ritual river dragging takes place at the turn of a season, summer to fall. It is shortly before the young hero, William Wallace, is to become a father. The ritual is presided over by the leader of the clan, Old Doc, who lives on top of a hill and rules from his porch rocker, who owns the wide net, and who often brings William Wallace back to earth with his guidance, enabling him to eventually discover his problem.

The problem propoerts to a lover's quarrel. Hazel is elated, mysterious, "touchy" over her coming motherhood. William Wallace doesn't understand this. Disgusted with him for staying out all night with the boys, she leaves him a fake suicide note, threatening to drown herself in the Pearl River. William Wallace then sets out to drag the river, even though his lackadaisical attitude is evidence of his disbelief that she has carried out her threat. The irony lies in his advocacy of a physical rather than an aesthetic solution to the problem. He must survive his agon, or conflict, in order to be happily reunited with Hazel.

In order to adjust ancient comedy to suit her 20th century tale, the storyteller must rely on the grandeur and power of the hero's antique comic experience to be performed with modern settings, events, and characters. The

characters' speech is colloquial and often interacts with their lazy culture. Its cadence is slow with the frequent use of apostrophes to indicate a "Southern drawl:"

You here me. Don't you know we have to drag the river?

Right this minute?

You ain't got nothin' to do till spring.

Let me go set foot inside the house and speak to my mother and tell her a story and I'll come back.⁶⁰

Plainly, the characters are dreamers. Also, descriptive images of "sycamore yellow," "catfish," and "Pearl River," in this section indicate the vision of a moist and pleasant forest where the adventure will take place. The mechanical nature of this stylized scene enables the hero to transcend reality, to make all history his own.⁶¹

From this point, into the second portion of the tale, myth emerges. We note, at once, the constant shift of verbs from the storyteller's descriptive past tense to the characters' active present. This grammatical transformation affords a release from the idyllic condition of each of the hero's "tests" and the "feast" of his triumph at overcoming them. In this way, the gamesome pleasure can be combined with an explanation as to the pain of its meaning.

Behind each of the hero's optative or conditional statements, lurks the rejoinder that what he expresses might not, or cannot, be true. Each image of delight in his forest adventure contains its own refutation as the hero makes the subjective mood his grammatical instrument:

Do you think she was carried off...his hand went into fists...There are Gypsies, kidnappers since the world began.
But was it you who would pay the grand ransom?
asked Doc.
They all laughed.⁶²

This passage, filled with uncertainties, builds up to the hero's test, which comes through repeated dives into the River, and especially through one long dive into the "dark clear world of deepness." Here he has a revelation about the secret of Hazel's trouble. He finally emerges "in an agony from submersion."⁶³ The testing is followed by a bacchanalian feast on fish from the Pearl River.

Many of the images of freshness, fertility, and power, which characterize this second section, become reversals or transposed echoes in the next and last. The timeless dream forest is now plausibly realized only in the "honeysuckle" and "crossroads" leading to the hero's "own house."⁶⁴ Similarly, the "China tree"⁶⁵ in his yard reflects the "sycamore yellow"⁶⁶ of the second section, but without the earlier connotations of artificiality connected with myth. This indicates that the lovers, reunited, have achieved temporary triumphs and brief freedom which makes them, at least for awhile, oblivious to the burdens, and fully sensitive to the advantages of their humanity.

Myth involves "Shower of Gold" as well. The story tells of another local hero; but this time, solely through comic monologue. Welty's role assumes the character of

Katie Rainey, a garrulous woman of some importance in the community. Alert to the most delicate social distinctions of the townsfolk, she is a fountain of local expressions. Not wanting to be reputed as a gad-about, she corners a stranger who must be informed about persons and situations in Morgana.

Mrs. Rainey's gossipy idioms plunge us immediately into the middle of life in this small Southern town:

That was Miss Snowdie MacLain. She comes after her butter, won't let me run over with it from just across the road. Her husband walked out of the house one day and left his hat on the banks of the Big Black River. Snowdie grieved for him...But I could almost bring myself to talk about it -- to a passerby, that will never see her again, or me either. My name's Mrs. Rainey.⁶⁷

"Just across the road," "Snowdie grieved for him" -- these idiosyncrasies are understandable only in the context of tradition. They are at home in the well worn, old-fashioned platitude made legal tender for their culture. Accompanying the idioms, an abundance of verbs facilitates Mrs. Rainey's flood of words. These speech patterns lend themselves well to exaggeration.

Mrs. Rainey expresses her verbal design with such active vitality that she catches the real, then carves it into an entity beyond its actuality. In this way, she is able to convey both the admiration and the outrage, felt by all Morgana, about King MacLain. Devoid of a voice or will of his own, King's mechanical reputation for boldly mocking

what is moral in society is achieved by seducing wives, cuckolding husbands, and appearing and disappearing mysteriously at will. His behavior ironically earns him more praise than apprehension as he becomes a legendary hero, a symbol for all freedom, uninhibited play, all the disorder missing in the townspeople's orderly lifestyles.

King's mythical counterpart is Zeus of the roving eye, who involves himself in a variety of amours with mortal women. King's wife, Snowdie, is obviously related to Danae, who, according to Greek myth, was confined by her father in a brazen tower, and was visited and impregnated by Zeus in a "shower of gold." Snowdie has been established in a house built especially for her by her father.

The irony of King's adventures resides in a paradox of the glory and comedy of man's achievement and joy that must also allow for the tragedy of his frustration and failure. This is realized when Mrs. Rainey colorfully describes one of King's surprise visits home on Halloween:

But yonder...was walking a man. Plez said it was a white man's walk and a walk he knew...Oh, it was King. Plez said he couldn't swear to seeing from the Presbyterian church exactly what King was doing, but he knows as good as seeing that he looked through the blinds. We shut the west out of Snowdie's eyes of course. He didn't get to knock on the door, but he had his knuckles stuck up, and out come the children on him, yelling "Boo!" and waving their arms up and down the way it would scare you to death. And they made a tremendous uproar with their skates, Plez said, and that was no mistake...Plez said King stood it a minute -- he got to turning around too...The minute come when King just couldn't get out quick enough.

As the tale develops into an incremental or hyperbolic pun on King, his absurdly human attributes emerge to display him as "King the victim" as well as "King the conqueror."

This major paradox is supported by a lesser one in the idioms of Mrs. Rainey. Her verbal symmetry and platitudes, by coloring realism with layers of words, improves on the real.

Tempted by paradoxes of my own, I will assert that the vitality and uniqueness of Welty's comic compositions rely on the richness of her rhetorical patterning. To study them dialectically is to bring out the seriousness in the comedy and the levity in the deeply serious. The verbal gestures that make up these "little dramas," these human actions complete in themselves, are audibly rhetorical; every grammatical phrase, every image, every turn of wit is purposive, as it is appealing.

Even appeal in Welty's prose is gained through strategy. But before emphasis can be given to the emotional qualities which are the essence of her art, Burke, a frequent reviewer, suggests lining up grammatical relations inherent in the author's key terms to discover the work's deeper designs that might otherwise be missed.

CHAPTER III

CLUSTERS

Kenneth Burke maintains that it is not enough to merely identify those rhetorical patterns present in art. Key patterns must be charted in order to sketch the work's major lines that lead further into meaning.

Through manipulation of specific rhetorical devices, Welty can vary each story significantly within her basic conversational structure that places her among other American writers. The most distinctive of her verbal techniques is the preference for non-transitive verbs, many abstract nouns, and the presence of many negations within her varying syntax. By the preference for non-transitive verbs, I mean two related habits: Frequent use of the passive voice and the employment of many intransitive verbs. Abstract nouns are often subjects of main or subordinate clauses.

I detail these features, especially, to establish that Welty's prose style is characteristically abstract; more explicitly, her main grammatical subjects are very often nouns for mental ideas. Her verbs, because they are non-transitive, tend to express states of being rather than particular, finite actions.

"Why I Live at the P.O." is a monologue. The events referred to are the perceptions and feelings of the eccentric speaker, Sister. Syntactic proof of this is the heavy use of "I," repeated five times in the first seven lines alone. Everything modifies that personal pronoun. This is necessary for Sister to maintain a narrow viewpoint, enabling her to offer a perspective rather than arrive at a conclusion. However, it is Sister's less concrete rhetorical pattern -- her use of intransitive verbs within a set syntactical structure -- that repetitively measures the ironic detachment with which she invites us to view her dramatic situation. Even her opening lines afford a prime example:

Of course I went with Mr. Whitacker first, when
he appeared here in China Grove, taking "Pose
Yourself" photos, and Stella Rhondo broke us
up.⁶⁹

There is a subtle interplay between cognitive and affective meaning here. The verb "appeared," though in some contexts lacking in affectivity of logic, takes on an affective coloration of the persona. Whatever its exact significance is in Sister's reasoning, a certain obscure and hyperbolic quality is evident in her speech from the start.

Sister's main use of abstractions is to enable her to deal, at the same time, with many objects or events rather than single or particular ones. Her compound/complex sentences are elongated for a particular effect:

So I hope to tell you, I marched in and got that radio (to take to the P.O.) and they could of all bit a nail in two, especially Stella-Rhondo, that it used to belong⁷⁰ to, and she well knew she couldn't get it back.

Typical of her diction, this scattered pattern is based on one of the classic contradictions in psychological comedy -- a reluctance to admit, to oneself, one's own mixed feelings.⁷¹ This idea is even more prevalent in her closing remark:

And if Stella-Rhondo should come to me this minute on bended knees, and attempt to explain the incidents of her life with Mr. Whitacker, I'd simply put my⁷² fingers in both my ears and refuse to listen.

The temporal clause, in the middle of the sentence, forces a pause after Mr. Whitacker for a very significant resonance. He is the subject of her anxiety, although not necessarily of her frame of mind. The intransitive verb "attempt" is ironically stated. One strongly senses that Sister would welcome any peace-making attempt by her family, for in the preceding passage we find her counting the days since her departure.

These artificial and stylized verbal acts dominate to the extent that Sister's ambivalence turns irony into something closer to the fatuity Constance Rourke characterizes at the "low-keyed humor of defeat."⁷³ Sister ends up isolated from the rest of her family, at the P.O., but our incremental involvement in her perplexity can only be resolved by laughter at the comic rhetorical patterns that

turn her contradictions into absurdities for a reductio ad absurdum effect.⁷⁴

Where Sister sacrifices economy of meaning and structure for an elaborate compounding of abstractions, in "Old Mr. Marblehall," Welty as storyteller, isn't making abstract or general statements. Her omniscient point of view is logically stated. The primary location of the narrative, in a mental state rather than a physical continuum, gives it freedom from time and space.

The storyteller finds many gamesome uses for the intransitive verb, "see," which appears no less than thirteen times throughout this brief narration. The verb has two functions. First, it introduces relative clauses -- "You see, even in summer, he wears it;"⁷⁵ it also introduces reported speech -- "You can see how people are taken aback."⁷⁶

Both functions are combined half-way through the tale where we get a timeless idea, based on chronologically separate events:

It's twilight, nobody could see anything. Just what Mr. Marblehall is bending over the zinnias for is a mystery, any way you look at it. But there he is, quite visible, alive and old, leading his double life...Perhaps one day, while Mr. Marblehall is standing there gently bent over the zinnias, this little boy is going to write on a fence, "Papa leads a double life." ...He finds things you wouldn't find...You see, one day he is going to follow Mr. Marblehall.

The storyteller's reported speech adds a pressure towards

Mr. Marblehall's fantasy life we would not sense if he himself were speaking. This gives Welty the opportunity to subordinate the concrete events in this phrase to its mental reflections. An ironic distance is achieved as we view Mr. Marblehall's world in this way. Also in this phrase, the relative clause, "one day he is going to follow Mr. Marblehall," as well as "any way you look at it," are implied negatives to the stated events that focus on his physical reality. The clause then becomes a tool used to combine the real with the fantasy. It also serves another function; as it is separated from the main clauses surrounding it, it effects a tendency for us to pause, and thus to qualify both the real and imagined worlds.

This stylistic pattern of conceptual events, to the non-conceptual, and back again, until Mr. Marblehall's real and fantasy worlds become indistinguishable, implies an expectation of his mental state. It has an abstract quality because the Storyteller does not arrive at an idea, but a non-action.

"Powerhouse," is concerned, not so much with a character's confused mental state, as with his perceptions of his world. Welty as Storyteller structures the tale by selecting thoughts and events representative of the immediate scene, then narrating them with the use of abstract nouns to suggest the mental drama of the hero's consciousness.

These nouns that are subjects of sentences are often

sensual:

Inside, sheltered dry smells stand like screens around a table covered with a red-checkered cloth, in the center of which flies hang on to an obelisk-ketchup bottle.⁷⁸

In direct speech, "screen" rather than "smells" would have been the subject. This abstraction adds an emotional quality to the scene that subordinates its physical event.

However, since emotions are never literally, but always metaphorically stated, this typical pattern also subordinates the presentation of life as experience to the presentation of life as spectacle. This not only establishes comic distance, but also tempts another line of thought.

If the scene is artificial, what about the human agents and acts involved?

There is an abstract quality to the conditional speech used to indicate the indifference of the entertainer's public:

He sat down and played it for a few minutes with outrageous force and got it under his power -- a bass deep and coarse as a sea net -- then produced something glimmering and fragile and smiled. And who could ever remember any of the things he says? They are just inspired⁷⁹ remarks that roll out of his mouth like smoke.

The storyteller, herself a viewer of Powerhouse, the entertainer, continually questions, but receives only her own dusty answers. The focus then shifts from Powerhouse's public with the copulative "then." It divides the phrase into a bipartite structure to form a dichotomy relating

directly to Powerhouse -- The denial of the "outrageous force" of the first part of the sentence, appears in the "fragile" second part. These abstract nouns aid the contrast between the entertainer's dramatic juxtaposition that is revealed in the happy behavior of the jazzman hero who conquers the agonies of his life through a blues-oriented toughness of spirit.

In "A Still Moment," Welty as Storyteller, maintains an aesthetic balance between a comically ironic distance and emotional involvement in order to present the universal context, that behind every idyllic individual circumstance, there lies an endless complexity of moral and social considerations. The tale then appeals to some abstraction of ourselves.⁸⁰

The multiplicity of relations -- between the Storyteller and the ideas about the characters she relates to create her universal, human perspective -- are held in suspension throughout the tale, in large part, by the number of "thats" presented. There are 30; several more are implied, such as "and (that) if he continued to look..." Of their vast number, a few are demonstrative; the most are relative pronouns. Their main function is to establish irony by leading the Storyteller's speech into both the realms of imagination and human restraint. In order to accomplish this, they must follow two separate patterns: They introduce relative clauses that deal, not with people,

but with objects and abstractions; they also introduce the reported speech that presents ideas as general representations of humanity. Both functions are combined repeatedly in the tale. For example:

It seemed to come in that same moment. Like Lorenzo's horror and the gun's firing, he knew that even the sight of the heron which surely he alone had appreciated, had not been all his belonging, and that never could any vision, even any simple sight, belong to him or to any man.

Characteristically, the three "thats" give us a triple definition of a timeless idea. They signal a shift from the immediate scene with "that same moment," to the "heron" which becomes a symbolic image by which the imagination releases a dreamlike "vision." The Storyteller's irony then resides in her affirmation of the pessimism in the vision and the idealism in the real.

The storyteller's use of myth in "The Wide Net" creates an imaginative distance between the work and the reading audience similar, in kind, to that which separates the author from the fictional narrator. The stylistic feature projecting this quality follows the pattern of the Burkeian negative. The abundance of "not this, but that" statements has several functions. It dehumanizes the main character through refutation of his humanistic to his heroic acts; it enacts the hero's tendency to hesitation and qualification of his situation; it also moves the reading audience into a judgmental frame of mind:

There ain't a thing better than fish, muttered William Wallace...The fish of Pearl River...But it seemed almost at once that he was leaping up, and one by one, up sat the others in their ring and looked at him, for it was impossible to stop and sleep by the river. 'You're feeling as good as you felt last night,' said Virgil...'The excursion is the same when you go looking for your sorrow as when you go looking for your joy,' said Doc. But William Wallace answered none of them anything.⁸²

In this phrase, "He was leaping up" is a concrete statement of a physical event. It is also suggestive of an implied expectation in William Wallace's mind which has not been fulfilled. It has an abstract quality because, while the hero is leaping into a particular physical event, he is also leaping into a mental reflection. This underlies the ironic perspective with which we are invited to view the character.

One of the diagnostic elements of the negative is its hyperbole, qualified with mock-scrupulousness, such as we get in "William Wallace answered none of them anything."⁸³ Its meaning is closer to "postpone." The voluntary postponed seriousness it denotes suggests the ambiguity that the hero's own consciousness of his underlying problem is apparent to him. This qualified hyperbole creates the half-realized image which is amusedly clarified by the Storyteller as the hero's role. His solemn obligations as husband and father-to-be are counterbalanced by his equally ceremonial sense of protocol about the coming event of the birth of his first child. This progressive

pattern structures the tale into a ludicrous consciousness of self.

In "Shower of Gold," the reading audience assumes the role of "outsider" in the tale and is constantly addressed by the speaker, Mrs. Katie Rainy, whose coy negations progress with the aid of various abstract nouns:

It was the only sign she ever give Morgana that maybe she didn't think the name King MacLain had stayed beautiful. But not much of a sign; some women don't name after their husbands, until they get down to nothing else left. I don't think with Snowdie even two other names meant she had changed yet, not towards King, that scoundrel.⁸⁴

The abstractness of the thrice-mentioned "name" as the object of her speech, artfully delays clarification of King's, the hero's, direct supreme qualities. This play on specific words structures the tale's negations:

Course, could have been a ghost, Plez told Mrs. Stark, but a ghost -- I believe -- if he had come to see the lady of the house, would have waited to have a word with her.⁸⁵

"Ghost" is a significant term, contrived to prefigure King's role in the tale -- as a symbolic free spirit who appears and reappears, phoenix style, at will. It gives us not only a detachment that is characterized by Mrs. Rainy about King's zeal, but also a curiosity about his indifference. This pattern places both the narrator and ourselves inside King's mind, yet we are also outside it by being given only the selected thoughts and events of the speaker. In this way, the human perspective presented is directed

back towards Mrs. Rainy, whose critical intellect is countered with the highly vulnerable generosity with which she includes an outsider into her little, close-knit society.

These demonstrated features that cluster throughout Welty's short stories develop her richly complicated, and highly organized prose, which immerses us in a variety of roles and events. The abstract perplexities in which they become involved, in turn, become characteristic of Welty's total writing style.

This evaluation gains force as it transcends into an analysis of the "Form" of emotional appeal Welty creates. Her abstractness of style overlaps into the quality she must maintain to persuade the reading audience to identify with her interests and beliefs.

CHAPTER IV

FORM

My subject to this point has been the connections between Welty's use of rhetoric that both catagorizes and individualizes her comic compositions. From here on, I shall concentrate on those strategies of syntax and vocabulary responsible for the qualitative forms of conflict and tension that repeat throughout her prose towards a syllogistic structure of argument that emphasizes antithesis and paradox, fantasy and reality, and a strong sense of moral conduct to the immoral.

Welty's prose creates an illusion that challenges a reading audience's sense of reality. In most of her works, where she speaks in her own voice by assuming the role of Storyteller, we see a born competitor who expresses mainly an experienced assertion of ideas, along with a general protestation of the natural force they assume once they are expressed. It is because of this unchallenging nature, appearing in her work, that she is able to carry her reading audience along. In this way, these qualitative forms are not only characteristic of Welty's individual prose style, but also symptomatic of herself. Therefore, this section will move back and forth between the work, the author,

and the audience, although it will focus mainly on the formal patterns of conflict and tension within the tales themselves.

"Relationships," says Welty, "are pervading and changing mysteries...Brutal or lovely, the mystery waits for people wherever they go, whatever the extreme they run into."⁸⁶ This self-appraisal of the human condition abounds in her work. To think of the complexity of debate that creates illusion in her tales is to be reminded of the complexity of judgment it requires. Each of her stories contains its own human drama that bulges with conflicting voices. Welty articulates them with her own commanding rhetoric.

For example, in "Why I Live at the P.O.," Sister's scattered, syntactical continuity is exaggerated in order to point up the dichotomy of right and wrong views. Certain of her prerogative, she makes no pretense of giving her opposition the benefit of the doubt:

But I says, too late. You tend to your house, and I'll tend to mine. The thermometer and the ukelele certainly were rightfully mine, and I stood on the step ladder and got all my watermelon-rind preserves and every fruit and vegetable I'd put up, every jar.⁸⁷

The conflict created by such determination is the unresolved tension of a mind already made up, rather than the healthy, balanced tension of independent and careful weighing.

However, the other characters' speech forms a loose parallel of syntactical discontinuity that also appears in the tale. Their short sentences of protestation, which dismiss Sister's argument, reverse the direction of the discourse:

But Stella-Rhondo says, "Yes, you did say it too."⁸⁸

"But you must remember Sister..."⁸⁹

"Don't Contradict me, I would," says Mama.⁹⁰

"Any objections?" asks Uncle Rhondo.⁹¹

These rejoinders signal conflict spectacularly because of the brevity and abruptness with which they reverse the direction of the argument. This is a common pattern Welty uses in her prose. "But" and other transitional words, of course, are often responsible for the many changes in direction her tales assume in order to move by negation.

The most noticable method of conflict in this tale, as in others, however, is the antithesis created. The dialogue is particularly full of contrasts:

Mama said, "I'm thoroughly ashamed of you." But of course she wasn't.⁹²

Like the other characters' speech, Sister's speech as well often dismisses her own arguments that have gone immediately before.

When opposition has its say within such a narrow syntactical span, the entire process of refutation can easily grow into a larger context by the pairing up of grammatical patterns:

Without so much as kiss my foot.⁹³

The loudest Yankee voice I ever heard in my life.⁹⁴

I believe to my soul he drank chemicals.⁹⁵

Sister's vocabulary that embeds her in her region, with expressions like the three-stressed pattern typical of mythical backwoods dialect, abound. However the reverse is also true:

Do you think you should disport with ketchup in Stella-Rhondo's flesh colored kimono.⁹⁶

Her vocabulary sometimes takes on a sophistication with such words as "disport." These seemingly contradictory patterns are characteristic of Sister's speech. Its mechanics result in a competitive implication that Sister is rooted in a small societal world to which she both conforms, yet rejects. Welty constantly exposes such contradiction to establish a tension that forces us into an anticipation of which way the events of Sister's speech will scatter next.

When antithesis works merely by the juxtaposition of disparate meanings, it may, often times, resemble paradox, which also deals with the "mysterious" oddities of human conduct. This is most prevalent in "Old Mr. Marblehall" where an insistence on the compatibility of seemingly incompatible acts points to the old man's world full of illusions, and a populace who refuses to take an honest look:

People naturally get bored. They say, "Well, he waited till he was sixty years old to marry, and

what did he want to marry for?" as though what he did was the excuse⁹⁷ for their boredom and their lack of concern.

This view of the corrupting gossip, in which the townsfolk are engaged, is undermined by their inability to penetrate the shrouds of Mr. Marblehall's secret life.

The varieties of this pattern suggests how numerous are the syntactical means by which Welty sets up her paradox:

(Mr. Marblehall) is just like other people... He could have easily danced⁹⁸ with a troupe of angels in Paradise every night.

Here paradox leans more toward incongruity rather than toward the overt contradictions that dominated in "Why I Live at the P.O." Rather than a mind made up, we see, in Mr. Marblehall, an unfulfilled expectation of the mind. The correlation between "people" and "angels" in this phrase, is an example of Welty's way of equating two separate vocabularies that would normally, to Mr. Marblehall's rigid mind, be taken antonymously. The two words echo "sinners" and the "saved." The storyteller's testimony points to the dichotomy of right and wrong views, although final judgment is reserved for the reading audience. In expressing her assertion with a negation, she exposes, to scorn, both the folly of one side's views, and the rascality of the other.

Another example lies in the by-now-familiar ratio between mental and physical acts, itself an instrument of denial in the whole of Welty's prose. Within this frame,

individuals embody differential conflicts that often lead the reading audience to distinguish between morality and virtue, or between immorality and corruption. Her use of vocabulary, many times, sets two things in rivalry to provide the general tension each tale assumes. In Mr. Marblehall's case, by presenting two terms such as the "people" of Natchez, and "Mr. Marblehall" himself, by way of Storyteller's precise comparisons and radical differentiations, the result typically resembles the perplexing mysteries behind human conduct, and requires our appropriate contemplation and debate.

Of course, mixed with apprehension, these idiosyncrasies of style lead back to irony as Welty's concern, once again, focuses not on the events of the stories themselves, but on the impressions they are making, or have made, on the characters. However, merely an ironic, and thus, total uninvolved of the artist with her characters would not hold audience appeal. A deeper involvement is required. Irony's counterpart is the Burkeian "dialectic" whose aim is "to give up a representation by the use of mutually related or interacting perspectives."⁹⁹ It is closer to what Welty creates to show that despite all their inevitable corruptions and incongruities, human relations are artistically humorous. However, humor is not always a laughing matter in her tales. It often takes the form of exaggeration to call attention to a character's serious

role, and to Welty's own searchings to find it.

Welty has said, "A fuller awareness of what I needed to find out about people and their lives had to be sought through writing stories."¹⁰⁰ That her tales serve as models for her own special searchings is especially indicated in "Powerhouse." Like her other works, the characters struggle for equilibrium between two sources of tension: their own inner strivings and the demands of reality they face. However, in this particular tale, the Storyteller constantly searches through a process of questioning:

You can't tell what he is. Negro man? he looks more Asiatic, monkey, Jewish, Babylonian, Peruvian, fanatic, devil.¹⁰¹

This line of inquisition invites overstatement since it does not express a precise thought, but instead expresses a given dimension of the persona. In this way, exaggeration is treated as a line of strategy to emphasize the point that lies beyond the thing in question, or in this case, the person in question, Powerhouse.

By using comparisons to Powerhouse, Welty seeks extremes of behavior. One need go no further than the quaint, old expressions, to which this strategy purports, to prove the point: slick as a whistle, fit as a fiddle, sharp as a tack, etc. These sayings hold firm in everyday speech because of their ability to make abstract comparisons that point to extremes. Welty's more original

comparisons follow this pattern:

He sat down and played it for a few minutes with outrageous force and got it under his power -- a bass as deep and as course as a sea net.¹⁰²

He listens as much as he performs¹⁰³ (emphasis mine)

There are a number of other, similar expressions. These particular ones create a vividness of the musical scene presented, then extend beyond to the repercussions of the scene's peculiarities. The conflicts establish that, like any writer or other artist who seeks individualization, the jazzman, as well, seeks his own unique "voice" through his instrument. A deep "base" and a deep sense of quiet, "listening," alienation to which the hero, always on stage, must adjust, draws a tight stylistic connection between both the attributes and the consequences viewed as representative of this type of lifestyle, and of the performer.

An antithesis results most vividly in the general perception and individuality of the musical scene presented:

Everybody, laughing as if to hide a weakness, will sooner or later hand him a written request.¹⁰⁴

This of course reveals the conflicting characteristics of behavior in Powerhouse's world where people are either weak or strong, with no in-betweens, and strength must be measured by the success of one's professional mask. Stylistically, this sets Powerhouse above his general public, while he remains tragically human.

Welty's portrayal of the hero who rises to the point of being different from the general public, yet never exempt from human fallibility, inspires "A Still Moment" as well. It is particularly rich in its use of historical to present juxtaposition:

But before them, the white heron rested in the grasses with the evening all around it, lighter and more serene than the evening...then, Audubon dreamed, with his mind going to his pointed brush...and he tightened his hand on the trigger of the gun and pulled it and his eyes went closed. In memory the heron was all its solitude, its total beauty.¹⁰⁵

This "legendary bird" compares remarkably to the famous albatross in Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." Like the Mariner, Audubon, who shot the bird, despite his pretensions, becomes both saint and conqueror. The bird's temporal existence has the rhetorical effect of presenting all people and events as equally available for comparison, as if the past and the present paradoxically coexist in Welty's vision through a likeness of spirit. The darkness of human motive and deed are once more in conflict with the whiteness of nature and its benevolent forces. The question of whether or not nature is any more benevolent than man provides the tension that is built by the pairing up of grammatical frames. For instance:

What each of them had wanted was simply all...
but now a single frail yearning seemed to go out
of the three of them for a moment and to stretch
toward this one snowy, shy bird in the marshes.

The bird was defenseless in the world except for
the intensity of its life.¹⁰⁶

In each sentence, the syntax of one-half mirrors its other half closely enough to show that the two separate meanings established are far from alike. There is no parallel at all, but a conflict to suggest the differences between existence and meaning. The mechanics of this pattern relies on the negation of a "not this but that" aim towards enabling us to see the situation doubly. Words such as "but" and "except," increases the uncertainty of a self-conscious reasoning of coexisting forces.

By exploiting three historically famous heroes in this fashion, the rarity of their likeness to the masses becomes one more way in which Welty uses hyperbolic extremes as strategy. Where in "Powerhouse," overstatements rigidly focused on one personality, here understatement might be a better term as we view her syntax doubling back on itself, in mirror fashion, to call greater attention to a universal and common ingestion of experience.

Welty's heros and heroines are portrayed all comically, all tragically to invoke both the physical facts of life and the nightmares of the psyche. In "A Wide Net" she intensifies this dual role her stories assume by bringing the characters more into the foreground than usual, letting them talk more through direct quotation. She then relents to the storyteller's abstract and impersonal theorizing about their conduct less. When Welty quotes her characters often, her own interceptions, because they are few and far

between, seem more judgmental than expository. Her speech resembles one of magisterial confidence as she paradoxically refutes and accepts the characters' behaviors by dealing out strategic comment:

"It's deep here," said Virgil. William Wallace stood looking down at the river as if it were still a mystery to him.

"This is hard on catfish," William Wallace said once...All day long William Wallace kept diving to the bottom. So far down and all alone...It could be nothing but the old trouble that William Wallace was finding out, reaching and turning in the gloom of such depths.¹⁰⁷

Snaking her way along in this way, Welty's syntax gets complex with an abundance of dependent or subordinate clauses, as the innocent and relatively curt remarks of her characters are immediately confronted with the logical reasoning of the Storyteller. This builds tension by establishing a climactic order to the prose. By this strategy, Welty is able to put, into end position, whatever she particularly wants to emphasize, often undercutting the scene's physical reality to the attitudes, motives and beliefs of the characters. Through these dramatic shifts of syntactical discontinuity, the brevity of the character's remarks are abruptly and thoroughly argued by the Storyteller, reversing the direction of the discourse again and again. Welty thus provides examples that direct the reading audience to recognize the incongruity between youthful zeal and experience to which the story purports.

The zeal of the characters' speech and the Storyteller's reasoning combine also to form a defense to support Welty's ethical appeal that the South's values include good moral character and good will, while at the same time, still expressing the "mystery" all relationships hold:

Just as the sun went down, Doc climbed his back steps, sat in his chair on the back porch where he sat in the evenings, and lighted his pipe. William Wallace hung out the net and came back and Virgil was waiting for him, so they could say good evening to Doc.

"All in all," said Doc, when they came up, "I've never been on a better river-dragging, or seen better behavior. If it took catching catfish to move the Rock of Gibraltar, I believe this outfit could move it." ¹⁰⁸

Again the complexity of the Storyteller's speech outweighs that of the characters as she gives us a sense of the Southern manners the character (Doc) then reenacts. Reminiscent of the mortality/virtue pattern we sensed in "Old Mr. Marblehall," the reading audience delights in the dialectal perspective implied, between the biblical "Rock of Gibraltar," and William Wallace's "old trouble," from the previous quote. This use of vocabulary contributes to Welty's success in enticing us into drawing the conclusion she desires, the conclusion that inconsistencies and contradictions exist among even seemingly idyllic and mythical beliefs and values.

This idea of a mythically perfect society turns to one of the gossipy, small-town busy-body in "Shower of Gold."

The speech of the Storyteller, Mrs. Katie Rainy, dominates. In it, conflict emerges most dramatically by her repetition of a precise vocabulary. This enables the reading audience to view the situation she presents doubly:

Time goes like a dream no matter how hard you run, and all the time we heard things from out in the world that we listened to but that still didn't mean we believed them.¹⁰⁹

In order to suggest the difference between mythical and real time, time is stylistically opposed by presenting it first as a "dream," then as being representative of the outer "world." The syntax of one half of the sentence then mirrors that of the other half to insist on the compatibility of the contrast between reality and fantasy created by the two terms.

However, while the stylistic technique conforms well to Welty's vision of the contradictions of the imagination to human conduct, a more subtle method serves to establish tension that entices our anticipation. She implies conflict by having the Storyteller state only her own skeptical viewpoint:

The most outrageous was the time my husband went up to Jackson. He saw a man that was the spit image of King in the parade...the inauguration of Governor Vardaman. But King could steal anyone's glory, so he thought...When I asked the way (King) looked, I couldn't get a thing out of my husband, except he lifted his feet across the kitchen floor like a horse and man in one, and I went after him with my broom.¹¹⁰

The paradox lurks outside the phrase. Not well concealed,

it hyperbolically points to what figuratively makes time pass swiftly for Mrs. Rainy. Absorbing all thought and energy into her gossip, the ambiguity created by imaginative stories of King's whereabouts, uncovers the dissimilarity between what is and what ought to be in small-town Southern life, at least according to Mrs. Rainy. Her distorted view is the comedy that ensues from the mistakes in her vision.

Through the rigid pattern she has established, of telling the reading audience the towns "secrets," we do not expect her to reform. However, this "open" dialogue does not spoil our anticipation, but intensifies it. Mrs. Rainy maintains some sense of mystery about the mythical character, King MacLain, as long as she can. This, in turn, heightens the reading audience's sense of dramatic irony as a perspective that takes the form of a contrast between what Mrs. Rainy knows, and what we know about Mrs. Rainy.

Thus, still another personality type is revealed through Welty's idiosyncrasies of style. She often flatters the average person, such as Mrs. Rainy, by asserting their arguments that, although rigid, avoid belonging to the slipshod. They instead persuade intellectually, through syntactical patterns that cajole the reading audience through the tale. The stylistic tension and conflict that accompanies her comedy then, asserts that Welty writes, not only about, but to real people. Her style is

personal; she writes in patterns that convince, or at less serious moments, that exaggerate, to depict, yet improve on the real.

It is Welty's relationship to the comedy and the tragedy in her prose that transcends her above other American humorists by way of the rhetorical situations she presents. Her active verbal characterizations create the architectural firmness of structure, precision of language, and sure command of appeal that both persuades, and invites opinion, to establish an "identity" between herself, her work, and her reading audience.

With the full circumference of analysis now pointing to this evaluation, the evaluation as well serves to refine Burke's contention that "effective literature could be nothing else but rhetoric."¹¹¹ And it is the interrelationships between the author, the work, and the reading audience that most prominently sets rhetorical analysis apart from other critical modes.

DISTILLATION

The human drama, Burke contends, is never pointedly fixed since the mind cannot totally grasp all the ramifications of a single event, let alone the self, others and interrelationships. Rather than conclude, dramatism's evolving stages symbolize a distillation of performances, whereby grammatical combinations dialectically function toward a mutual evaluation.

In terms of analysis of prose fiction, dramatism serves to avoid two extremes -- both the view that a story has as many meanings as it does readers, and the view that stubbornly turns the story into a scientific calculation with only one correct solution. The reasonable position explores the human drama that unites the fiction, the author and the reading audience to accept individual judgment within the allowable interpretations the author persuasively creates.

If the study of prose fiction, as educators purport, serves to broaden the range of experiences, feelings and the insights into life, then the fiction itself is a contemplation and criticism of life. The power of dramatism lies in accepting and presenting this concept as a strategy for analysis. Thus, it studies the development of the

fiction's human drama, through stages, to the final synthesis. Such a study organizes the presentation and application of the fiction into the unique interpretations of experience that become the author's individual and stylistic voice.

NOTES

¹Kenneth Burke, Counter-Statement (1931; rpt., Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968). p. 141.

²_____, The Philosophy of Literary Form: Studies in Symbolic Action (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967), p. 3.

³_____, A Grammar of Motives (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc. 1945), pp. 15-20.

⁴_____, The Rhetoric of Religion (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961), pp. 2-3. Compare with Sigmund Freud's Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious, ed. James Strachey (1905; rept., London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1960).

⁵_____, A Grammar of Motives, pp. 21-35.

⁶_____, "Dramatism," in International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, ed. David L. Still (New York: MacMillan and the Free Press, 1968), Vol. VII, p. 445.

⁷_____, A Grammar of Motives, pp. 77-78.

⁸Ibid., pp. 3-20.

⁹Eudora Welty, "Why I Live at the P.O.," in The Collected Stories of Eudora Welty (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich Publishers, 1980), p. 47.

¹⁰Kenneth Burke, Language as Symbolic Action: Essays on Life, Literature, and Method (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), p. 16.

¹¹_____, A Grammar of Motives, pp. 152-159.

¹²Eudora Welty, "Shower of Gold," in The Collected Stories of Eudora Welty, p. 274.

¹³Kenneth Burke, The Rhetoric of Religion, pp. 218-219.

¹⁴This is a term Burke employs often. He traces the phrase to Neitzsche. It operates like a metaphysical image that arranges unexpected items in their proper order to provide new and unusual insights. He has written a book by the same name. It serves as the title of an anthology of his work: Perspectives by Incongruity, ed. Stanley Edgar Hyman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964).

¹⁵William Howe Rueckert, ed, Critical Responses to Kenneth Burke (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1966), p. 330.

¹⁶Kenneth Burke, "Rhetoric - Old and New" in New Rhetorics, ed. Martin Steinmann (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1967), pp. 60-76.

¹⁷Ibid., Burke explains that "the key term for "new" rhetoric would be "identification."

¹⁸_____, Counter-Statement, p. 151.

¹⁹_____, A Rhetoric of Motives (1962; rpt., Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), pp. 208-212.

²⁰_____, Language as Symbolic Action, p. 369.

²¹_____, The Philosophy of Literary Form, pp. 3-36.

²²Ibid., p. 33.

²³William Howe Rueckert, ed, Critical Responses to Kenneth Burke, p. 137.

²⁴Ibid., p. 137.

²⁵Kenneth Burke, the Philosophy of Literary Form, pp. 29-30.

²⁶Ibid., p. 20.

²⁷_____, "The Poetic Process," in Counter-Statement, pp. 45-62.

²⁸Butcher, S. H., "Imitation as an Aesthetic Term," in Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1951), pp. 121-162.

²⁹ Kenneth Burke "A Dramatistic View of the Origins of Language, Part I," in The Quarterly Journal of Speech, XXXVII (October 1952), pp. 256-259.

³⁰ _____, Counter-Statement, p. 190.

³¹ Ibid., p. 125.

³² Ibid., p. 124.

³³ _____, Towards a Better Life (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1932), p. xiii.

³⁴ John Stuart Mill, Dissertations and Discussions (New York, 1882), Vol. I, p. 97.

³⁵ David E. E. Sloane, Mark Twain as a Literary Comedian (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), p. 1.

³⁶ Eudora Welty, "A Worn Path," in The Collected Stories of Eudora Welty (New York: Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich Publishers, 1980), p. 145.

³⁷ _____, "Death of a Traveling Salesman," in The Collected Stories of Eudora Welty, p. 126.

³⁸ Henri Bergson, "Laughter," in Comedy, ed., Wylie Sypher, New York: Doubleday, 1956, p. 79.

³⁹ Eudora Welty, "Why I Live at the P.O.," in The Collected Stories of Eudora Welty, pp. 49-54.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 48.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 56.

⁴² _____, "Old Mr. Marblehall," in The Collected Stories of Eudora Welty, p. 93.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 91.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 92.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 93.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 94.

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 95-96.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 97.

⁴⁹Eudora Welty, "Powerhouse," in The Collected Stories of Eudora Welty, p. 131.

⁵⁰Henri Bergson, Laughter, p. viii.

⁵¹Eudora Welty, "Powerhouse," in The Collected Stories of Eudora Welty, p. 133.

⁵²Ibid., p. 135.

⁵³Ibid., p. 139.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 141.

⁵⁵_____, "A Still Moment," in The Collected Stories of Eudora Welty, p. 189.

⁵⁶Jonathon Daniels, The Devil's Backbone: The Story of the Natchez Trace (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1962), pp. 142-143.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 143.

⁵⁸Eudora Welty, "A Still Moment," in The Collected Stories of Eudora Welty, p. 189.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 196.

⁶⁰_____, "A Wide Net," in The Collected Stories of Eudora Welty, p. 170.

⁶¹Jennifer Randisi advances this notion in A Tissue of Lies: Eudora Welty and the Southern Romance (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, Inc. 1982), p. vii. Ms. Randisi states for example that "Imagery is not event per se, but the interpretation or version of event as translated by the writer or storyteller," p. viii.

⁶²Eudora Welty, "A Wide Net," in The Collected Stories of Eudora Welty, pp. 174-175.

⁶³Ibid., p. 180.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 187.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 188.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 176.

⁶⁷_____, "Shower of Gold," in The Collected Stories of Eudora Welty, p. 263.

⁶⁸Ibid., pp. 270-272.

⁶⁹_____, "Why I Live at the P.O.," in The Collected Stories of Eudora Welty (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich Publishers, 1908), p. 46.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 54.

⁷¹Maurice Charney, Comedy High and Low: An Introduction to the Experience of Comedy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 4-5.

⁷²Eudora Welty, "Why I Live at the P.O.," in The Collected Stories of Eudora Welty, p. 56.

⁷³Constance Rourke, American Humor (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1931), pp. 178-181.

⁷⁴This Latin phrase is a common one to ancient comic analyses. It means reduce to absurdity.

⁷⁵Eudora Welty, "Old Mr. Marblehall," in The Collected Stories of Eudora Welty, p. 91.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 92.

⁷⁷Ibid., pp. 94-95.

⁷⁸_____, "Powerhouse," in The Collected Stories of Eudora Welty, p. 135.

⁷⁹Ibid., pp. 140-141.

⁸⁰This idea is advanced by Walker Gibson in "Authors, Speakers, Readers, and Mock Readers," from Reader-Response Criticism, ed. Jane P. Tompkins (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1980), pp. 1-24.

⁸¹Eudora Welty, "A Still Moment," in The Collected Stories of Eudora Welty, p. 198.

⁸²_____, "The Wide Net," in The Collected Stories of Eudora Welty, p. 181.

⁸³Ibid., p. 181.

⁸⁴_____, "Shower of Gold," in The Collected Stories of Eudora Welty, p. 267.

⁸⁵Ibid., p. 273.

⁸⁶ Eudora Welty, The Eye of the Story: Selected Essays and Reviews (New York: Random House, 1970), p. 114.

⁸⁷ _____, "Why I Live at the P.O.," in The Collected Stories of Eudora Welty (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich Publishers, 1980), p. 54.

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 47.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 50.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 50.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 52.

⁹² Ibid., p. 46.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 49.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 51.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 51.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 52.

⁹⁷ _____, "Old Mr. Marblehall," in The Collected Stories of Eudora Welty, p. 93.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 93.

⁹⁹ Kenneth Burke, A Grammar of Motives (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1945), p. 503.

Burke redefines irony in dramatistic terms as a dialectic that "aims to give us a representation by the use of mutually related or interacting perspectives--and this resultant perspective of perspectives will necessarily be a reduction in the sense that a chart drawn to scale is a reduction of the terms that are charted."

¹⁰⁰ Eudora Welty, The Eye of the Story, pp. 354-355.

¹⁰¹ _____, "Powerhouse," in The Collected Stories of Eudora Welty, p. 131.

¹⁰² Ibid., pp. 140-141.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 131.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 132.

105 _____, "A Still Moment," in The Collected Stories of Eudora Welty, pp. 196-197.

106 Ibid., p. 196.

107 _____, "The Wide Net," in The Collected Stories of Eudora Welty, pp. 177-180.

108 Ibid., p. 185.

109 _____, "Shower of Gold," in The Collected Stories of Eudora Welty, p. 267.

110 Ibid., p. 268.

111 Kenneth Burke, Counter-Statement (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1931), p. 210.

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